schemes in the Port Trust and Dock Labour Board;

(b) if so, since when and the number of employees/workers opted for voluntary retirement under the scheme;

(c) the purpose of introducing the scheme;

(d) the steps taken to create a uniform labour system and for their proper utilisation; and

(e) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Government of India introduced the scheme in the Major Port Trusts and Dock Labour Boards in 1991 with a view to reduction the surplus manpower, 10,562 employees/workers have taken voluntary retirement under this scheme so far.

(d) and (e) Efforts are on to introduce inter-changeability between dock and share workers. A bill providing an enabling provision for merger of Dock Labour Boards with respective Port Trusts is under consideration in the Rajya Sabha.

Repeal of Illegal Migrants Act

*68. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the times of India dated 8th January, 1997, under the heading "Assam intellectuals want Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act scrapped;

(b) if so, the reasons advanced by them for scrapping the Act; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The arguments in favour of scrapping the Act as indicated in the news item are;

(i) The onus of proving that the accused is a foreigner is on the complainant.

(ii) The process of detecting the illegal migrants has been slow.

(c) In view of the divergence of opinion for and against repeal of the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act, the Government is at present studying the various implications of the Act. A final decision in the matter will be taken only after examining all the issues in detail.

New Shipping Policy

*69. SHRI JAYANT KUMAR MALHOUTRA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any new shipping policy; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

On demand telephone connection in Delhi

*70. SHRI O. P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Department of Telecommunications had envisage that by March, 1997, telephones would be available on demand in Delhi;

(b) if so, whether this target is likely to be achieved within the fixed time-frame; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) to (c) The National Telecom Policy 1994 envisages provision of telephone on demand by 1997. This was to be accomplished with the participation of private sector complementing the efforts of Government.